Addressing Selection Criteria

Growing Your Knowledge Base
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Addressing Selection Criteria

Most people are familiar with having to lodge a resume and a covering letter when applying for work, but many may not understand the process for addressing selection criteria. Some positions, especially government positions and higher level positions, require that you make a statement of claims against the selection criteria, sometimes called addressing the selection criteria.

If you are asked to address selection criteria, as part of an application process, then this will become a very important part of the whole process. Addressing selection criteria means that you are being asked to write a statement of claims against the criteria the employer is using to choose the best applicant for the job. This statement of claims is in addition to your covering letter and resume.

If you do not address each criterion individually, your application may not be considered, so it is worthwhile spending some time learning how to respond.

Whether, a position for which you are applying asks you to address the selection criteria or not, knowing the process will enhance your success in securing an interview.

What are Selection Criteria?

At a basic level, selection criteria are the way in which employers assess your suitability for a position. The selection criteria for a job is the list of personal qualities, skills, abilities, knowledge and work experience, and in some instances qualifications, you need to possess to get the job and to perform the role. Selection Criteria are used to compare and shortlist applicants for interview and to choose the best one.

Many positions will divide Selection Criteria into essential and desirable criteria. You must have all the essential criteria to be a strong applicant. The desirable criteria are not as critical, but will improve your overall competitiveness.

Some essential selection criteria may carry more importance than others, and if this is the case this is usually noted in the advertisement or selection information pack for the position. This should be noted and considered when preparing your responses.

Employers use the Selection Criteria to compare applicants using a standard measurement. The general process is that you will be rated for each criterion and then these ratings will be added together to give a total score. This total score is used to compare you to other applicants.

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Selection Criteria can be based on: skills and abilities; knowledge; experience; qualifications; and work related qualities. Usually there will be an indication of how you are to lay out your statement to substantiate your capacity. Care needs to be taken to pull apart the criterion, to ensure you address it fully.

Here is an example:

*Demonstrated high level communication skills dealing with a broad range of stakeholders.*

In this example selection criterion, you are being asked for several things. First to “demonstrate” high level communication. You need to show examples to prove you have this experience.

The second thing to note is that you are being asked for “high level’ communication skills, so you will need to show examples of high level communication skills such as complex report writing, giving presentations to key groups or other critical activities that show complexity, skill and importance such as the ability to influence listeners or handle sensitive information appropriately.

Finally, you are being asked about communication to a “broad range of stakeholders. In this instance, you need to show how you have communicated with different groups, requiring different levels of information and showing that you can adjust your style to meet the needs of the recipients. You will also need to show that you have used a broad range of communication channels (methods of communication) as appropriate for the content being communicated.

Other Resources

The following video provides information on Interpreting Selection Criteria. This is very important for ensuring you prepare a good response.

The following article provides some sample selection criteria responses.

Following is a series of step by step videos on interpreting, laying out and responding to selection criteria.

- Video part 1
- Video part 2
- Video part 3

This is another good video that breaks down the process of addressing selection criteria.

The attached article comes from SEEK and covers How to Address Key Selection Criteria.
Preparing to write your statement of claims

Addressing selection criteria involves providing examples of how you meet the criteria, showing your experiences or capabilities through specific details and the level of success you have achieved. Before you begin writing your statements to address the selection criteria, you need to follow this process.

1. Do some background research on the employer or organisation to understand why the selection criteria are important and what this means for the position. You will need to think about the selection criteria from the potential employer’s perspective, to put the job requirements into context. So, think about why the employer wants these particular skills and abilities.

2. Read each selection criterion carefully to get clear on what you are meant to cover in your statement. Follow the instruction given for each criterion, for example “demonstrated”, as noted, means you need to show examples of having done something before. “Proven track record” means you need to show consistent results over time. “Well-developed skills” means you should show the breadth and depth of those skills. “High level knowledge” is about the learning, training or education that you possess that proves you have the knowledge, or evidence of how you have acquired this knowledge through experience. The key is to identify the critical words in each criterion and make sure you use the language used by the employer when preparing your statements.

3. Identify your key strengths and the best examples of your experience and history that match each of the criteria. Use the STAR method to complete your statement (see below), as this creates a simple framework for your answer.

4. Proof your application carefully. Get a separate pair of eyes to do this as it is very hard to read your own writing. Spelling errors, typos, grammatical errors, omissions or inconsistent formatting styles may negatively impact your application.

What to do when the selection criteria are not listed in a job advertisement

There will be instances when jobs are advertised that do not list selection criteria specifically. If this occurs, you may need to confirm that these are not included in a separate Information Pack. Some employers create job information packs to distribute to potential candidates. Check if one is available. Some employers may have an online application process and key questions may be asked during this step to help determine which applicants should proceed to the next stage in the recruitment process.

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If a job information pack is not available, and there is limited detail in the job advertisement, then you could contact the employer direct to ask for more information.

When contacting employers, make sure you prepare your questions ahead to ensure you do not waste their time. Always ring at time when you expect them to be less busy and check that they have time to talk when you call. If you handle this call properly, you make get an edge on the job interview. If you handle it badly, this could spell the end of your application.

When calling, also be prepared to answer their questions. Think about what you might say to some general questions so you can answer these well “on the spot” such as “Tell me a little bit about yourself?” or “What interests you about this job?” or “why do you think you will be a good fit for this position?” You could also consider emailing them to ask for more information.

If contacting the employer is not possible, you might try to determine what selection criteria the employer would value for the position from the advertisement. It is worth noting that not all employers will have given this any thought but you should. Think about what would be important to the tasks being performed by the job. All this work will help you prepare for the interview, so this is a valuable activity.

Sample Answer using the STAR Method

Here is a worked example using the criterion discussed previously in this guide.

**Criterion 1: Demonstrated high level communication skills dealing with a broad range of stakeholders.**

In my previous position with the XYZ company, I was the project manager for the introduction of a new service for our company. This new service was a departure from the company’s usual activities and represented a major cultural change for the organisation. It required high level communication with a broad range of stakeholders both internal and external to the business.

During the roll out of this new service I was the key person responsible for developing and delivering the communication plan, engaging key stakeholders in the development of the service, communicating to the project team, and promoting this service to customers. I also had responsibility for developing and briefing all staff on the new service and procedures for implementation. Additionally, as part of this project I had to provide detailed reports and evaluations to the management steering committee.
Sample Answer cont.

As this new service affected all staff, I had to develop a detailed communication and education plan. This plan was implemented through the delivery of short courses, written procedural statements and checklists for display at work station, and amendments to the company policies, procedural guides. These tasks required careful consideration of the audience, tailored messaging and high level skills in both written and verbal communication.

I used a number of communication channels to reach a very broad base of stakeholders always ensuring that the communication level, style and frequency matched the stakeholder needs. Stakeholders included team members, staff, management, collaborators involved in the development of the service, suppliers and finally customers. These channels included all the methods noted above, plus texting, email and delivery of updates via newsletters and our intranet. Opportunities for feedback, and stakeholder engagement were provided. These tasks required very high level communication skills including networking, liaising, facilitations, and high level negotiations and conflict resolution skills when handling concerns about the changes.

This project was delivered on time even though the timeframe was extremely tight. During the project review, the detailed communication plan and effective messaging I developed during this project were highlighted as the key reasons the project was successful. This roll out was achieved with minimal disruption to service delivery demonstrating the effectiveness of my communications regarding the changes and handling all challenges arising from this major organisational change.

Success Tips

- Make sure you proof your answers or statements of claims, or get someone else to check it for you. Check for typos, errors of omission, grammatical mistakes and readability.
- Address any obvious weaknesses you may have in terms of the selection criteria and indicate that you are willing to undertake any training to address these weaknesses.
- Make sure your resume, statement of claims addressing the selection criteria, and covering letter all match and are consistent with one another in terms of content, writing style and formatting.
- Make sure all your documents use the language of the employer – do this by highlighting key words in the advertisement or job application pack and using these throughout.
- Use strong action words in your statement of claims.
- Working on your selection criteria will help you prepare for the interview, so do not underestimate the value of investing your time in this process.
- Talk to your referees before you apply about the position, the selection criteria and discuss what they will say about when contacted.

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CONNECT offers a range of youth services, including the Work It Out programme which operates in the Northern Rivers of NSW. The Work It Out Programme is designed to support young people aged 15-19 who are not in employment, education or training to either re-engage with school or transition to training or work.

More information on the Work It Out Programme can be found at the Work It Out website, along with other guides in this series.

Check out our website at the link below for more Guides in the Work It Out series.

[www.workitout.org.au](http://www.workitout.org.au)